

Safety and Emergency Response Committee

DSA Advisory Board
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, July 27, 2004

DSA L.A. Regional Office
DSA Conference Room
311 South Spring Street, Suite 1301
Los Angeles, California

Committee Members Present

Jo Ann Koplin, Chair
Gale Bate
Kennith Hall
Mike Modugno
Art Ross
Chris Wills

DSA Staff Present

Jack Bruce
Jim McCarthy
Elena Tarailo

Others Present

Keith Garcia, Red Cross
Robert Kamm, Los Angeles Unified School
District

Committee Members Absent

Steve Newsom
Henry Reyes

1 **Call to Order**

2 Committee Chair Jo Ann Koplin called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and welcomed
3 everyone.
4

5 **Introduction and Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

6 Ms. Koplin observed that the November 21, 2002 minutes had already been approved at a
7 previous board meeting.
8

9 Ms. Koplin noted the committee was reconvening after a long hiatus due to the state
10 budget crisis. She suggested the committee review past activities, accomplishments, and
11 goals, and determine what tasks should be addressed in the future. She also mentioned
12 the Disaster Resistant Conference sponsored by the Office of Emergency Services held in
13 Sacramento last April.
14

15 Ms. Koplin introduced Mr. Keith Garcia, Assistant Response Officer for the Red Cross. She
16 said the committee was unclear about the roles and responsibilities of the Red Cross, and
17 how those functions fit in with those of DSA and other state agencies. Noting that Mr.
18 Garcia had to leave early, she suggested moving that item up on the agenda.
19

20 Participants then took turns introducing themselves.
21

22 Ms. Koplin drew attention to the summary of the committee's past accomplishments and
23 goals for 2003. She noted the goals included overseeing the development of DSA's safety
24 plan, Mr. Jack Bruce will report on the status of this project later in the meeting.
25

26 Ms. Elena Tarailo noted that the goal of seeking authority for DSA to post unsafe school
27 buildings after a disaster was achieved by staff and signed in April 2003 through DGS

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Administrative Order 03-03, "Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities and Services", and said this item can be removed from the committee's list of goals.

Mr. Kenneth Hall asked if the posting authority extended to state buildings. Mr. Bruce responded that the statutory authority was limited to posting schools after disasters. Mr. Hall noted that State Architect Stephan Castellanos indicated he would like the authority to post other state buildings as well. The committee briefly discussed DSA's role & the role of the Real Estate Services Division (RESA) regarding this matter.

Ms. Koplin observed that technology was another item on the committee's list of goals, and asked for the committee's input. Mr. Chris Wills noted the item dealt with communications systems. Mr. Hall stated the committee discussed this as it related to the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and collaborating with local emergency responders. The committee agreed to leave this goal on the list.

Mr. Hall asked if SEMS training was provided to DSA staff yet. Mr. Bruce replied that DSA is currently under contract with the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to provide training for staff after the SEMS plan for DSA is developed and approved by management. Training will be scheduled following plan development.

Mr. Wills reported that his agency, the California Geologic Survey (CGS), is participating in the OES training for post-disaster safety assessment. He noted all staff geologists will be attending sessions to learn how to post buildings after disasters. He said the program will give CGS staff the ability to survey disaster areas and identify ground failure and other geologic hazards.

Mr. Bruce said DSA will also be participating in that training. He clarified that DSA currently has two contracts with OES, one for developing the SEMS plan for DSA and another for post-disaster evaluation training.

Ms. Koplin suggested adding the OES training for DSA staff to the committee's goals. Mr. Gale Bate noted that both SEMS training and OES post-disaster training are included in Administrative Order 03-03.

Ms. Koplin said the next goal was working with the California Department of Education (CDE) regarding schools preparedness and data collection on building damage. She noted Mr. Steve Newsom left CDE, and when CDE selects his replacement, that person should be invited to join the committee. She added that Mr. Newsom will continue to participate as a committee member.

Ms. Koplin observed that another goal was adding a local building official to the committee. Committee members agreed that this was still a worthwhile goal. Mr. Bate offered to ask Mr. Tom Shih to join the committee.

Ms. Koplin said the next goal was studying emergency portable building criteria, and noted there has been quite a bit of work done in this area. Mr. Bate recalled that the committee identified this as a goal in response to concerns about the increased use of temporary portable buildings in conjunction with increased school construction. Mr. Art Ross voiced his concern regarding whether portables should be allowed for use as emergency shelters.

Ms. Koplin noted one of the reasons the committee wanted to work with the Red Cross was to clarify the criteria used to designate schools as emergency shelter sites. She invited

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Mr. Garcia to provide a brief presentation.

Red Cross Presentation

Mr. Garcia stated that local high schools and junior high schools are the first choice for Red Cross as emergency shelters, and park and recreation centers are the second choice. He said Red Cross usually chooses the site closest to the disaster area, but in cases where there is a threat of exposure to hazardous materials, for example, Red Cross looks at a wider range of sites.

Mr. Garcia reported that after the Whittier Narrows earthquake and the Northridge earthquake, the Los Angeles chapter of the Red Cross used a number of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) facilities. He noted LAUSD has its own staff of engineers, and the Red Cross relies on the school district to notify them of safety issues regarding specific facilities. As an example, he noted in the Whittier earthquake, LAUSD engineers determined that one school gymnasium had structural problems and was not used as an emergency shelter.

Mr. Garcia commented that other chapters of the Red Cross make their own arrangements with school districts in their areas, and some school districts do not have an engineering staff to provide their professional advice. In some situations, the Red Cross uses community college facilities instead of junior high or high school gymnasiums. Mr. Garcia noted there are areas in California that have no local Red Cross chapters, so assistance is imported from other chapters when necessary.

Mr. Robert Kamm, Los Angeles Unified School District, said LAUSD prefers to use high schools and junior high schools for emergency shelters because those facilities usually have separate showers, restrooms, and cafeterias. He confirmed that LAUSD works with Red Cross to select the best facilities. Mr. Kamm added that the district has made arrangements with Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to provide bus service for transporting people to shelters.

Mr. Hall asked what criteria they use to identify which buildings are seismically safe for use as emergency shelters. He noted there is considerable variation in the age and design of school buildings. Mr. Kamm said LAUSD does not have a formal set of criteria to determine which locations are better than others. He added that the district is developing a new mitigation plan, and it would be good to include criteria in that plan. Mr. Kamm recognized that it would be advantageous to have a method of identifying suitable sites in advance of a disaster.

Mr. Mike Modugno observed that there should be a procedure to allow engineers to look at school facilities immediately after earthquakes to determine if they are structurally safe. Mr. Kamm said school district officials and engineers always do walk-throughs of buildings before approving them for use as shelter sites. Mr. Garcia added that the Red Cross relies on school districts to tell them which sites are safe.

Mr. Kamm described LAUSD's existing program for assessing structural conditions and rating school facilities. Ms. Koplin recommended making that information available to the Red Cross.

Committee members discussed how school districts work with emergency operations centers and local building officials to request damage assessments. Mr. Gale Bate emphasized the need to clarify roles and responsibilities so all parties have a clear

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1 understanding of their authority.

2
3 Committee members encouraged LAUSD and other school districts throughout the state to
4 take inventories of their facilities, assess their structural conditions, and identify safe shelter
5 sites.

6
7 Committee members thanked Mr. Garcia for attending.

8
9 Ms. Koplin expressed concern about keeping emergency bins at school sites well stocked.
10 She asked how LAUSD manages that program. Mr. Kamm said each school is responsible
11 for maintaining emergency supplies. He noted the storage bins contain a three-day supply
12 of water, some food, search-and-rescue kits, first aid materials, and emergency supplies
13 such as flashlights and tarps. Ms. Koplin said CDE provides lists of what the bins are
14 supposed to include.

15
16 Ms. Koplin clarified that state law requires that each school develop an emergency plan,
17 and school boards are responsible for reviewing emergency plans and making sure they
18 are implemented. Committee members questioned whether the requirements are being
19 enforced and whether school boards are liable for noncompliance.

20
21 Committee members noted many school districts lack the resources to purchase adequate
22 supplies. Mr. Ross said parent groups and volunteers sometimes take the initiative to pay
23 for emergency supplies.

24
25 Ms. Koplin suggested that the committee look at the issue of maintaining emergency supply
26 bins on school campuses and determining where they should be located. She advocated
27 developing criteria to guide school districts in choosing appropriate locations for their
28 emergency supply bins. Committee members agreed it would be worthwhile to add this
29 topic to the committee's list of future tasks.

30
31 Ms. Koplin noted the committee may be able to provide useful feedback to LAUSD when
32 they prepare the district's mitigation plan. She welcomed suggestions from Mr. Kamm as
33 to specific individuals from LAUSD who might be interested in attending future committee
34 meetings. Mr. Kamm recommended inviting staff responsible for school district facilities at
35 LAUSD.

36
37 Ms. Koplin asked if there was a way for authorized engineers and DSA representatives to
38 obtain proper identification cards so they can gain access to school sites after disasters.
39 Mr. Bate noted local police and fire departments need to be trained to recognize their ID's
40 to allow access. Mr. Bruce indicated that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) will
41 convey information such as this in DSA's training sessions.

42
43 Committee members noted that DSA lacks authority to insist on access to disaster sites.
44 They recognized that DSA offers its services for inspecting buildings for damage, but it is
45 up to OES to delegate authority to DSA when a disaster is officially declared.

46
47 Mr. Bate observed that once a school is occupied, DSA lacks authority to do much more
48 than play a supportive role.

49
50 Ms. Koplin proposed inviting a representative from CDE to a future meeting to brief the
51 committee on the status of their preparedness efforts.

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1 Committee members agreed that DSA can play a role in helping school districts prepare for
2 disasters. They expressed concern about the current lack of information regarding which
3 schools are safe for use as emergency shelters. Mr. Ross recommended tightening the
4 process and having DSA structural engineers inspect and approve school buildings before
5 they are used as shelters.

6
7 Mr. Hall suggested that it would be better to concentrate first on developing DSA's
8 emergency plan, and then use that document as a starting point to identify specific ways of
9 helping. Ms. Koplin noted Mr. Bruce would be providing an update on DSA's emergency
10 plan after the lunch break.

11
12 At 11:50 a.m., the committee recessed for lunch. The meeting was reconvened at
13 1:00 p.m.

Update on DSA's Emergency Response Plan

14
15 Mr. Jack Bruce distributed copies of Administrative Order 03-03, defining the role of state
16 agencies in emergency preparedness. He pointed out the DGS preparedness activities
17 listed on Page 4 of the document, and noted DSA is mandated to maintain access to
18 building plans for public school buildings, while the Real Estate Services Division (RESO)
19 has responsibility to maintain building plans for state-owned buildings. Mr. Bruce then drew
20 attention to the bulleted items on Page 5 outlining DSA and RESO response activities, and
21 the bulleted items on Page 7 describing recovery activities.

22
23
24 Mr. Bruce reported that DSA contracted with OES to develop an emergency plan and
25 provide staff training. He estimated that the emergency plan is about 80 percent complete,
26 and training will begin after the plan is completed and approved, possibly this fall.

27
28 Mr. Bruce provided copies of a flow chart illustrating how DSA works with OES and other
29 agencies during disasters. He said the plan has yet to be tested in an actual disaster.

30
31 Committee members asked about how the California Performance Review (CPR) will
32 impact DGS operations. Mr. Bruce said the outcome is uncertain at this time. He added
33 that the CPR report is expected to be released in a few days, so more will be known soon.

34
35 Mr. Hall mentioned that in a previous meeting the committee discussed whether school
36 buildings used as shelters should be held to higher standards than other buildings and
37 concluded that school buildings were already built to higher standards.

38
39 Ms. Koplin observed that there is an existing process for assessing essential facilities that
40 might also be appropriate for schools used as emergency shelters. She noted the ATC-20
41 guidelines provide for inspections of essential facilities by structural engineers. Mr. Bruce
42 said DSA believes school facilities used as shelters should be checked by a structural
43 engineer prior to occupancy. Committee members pointed out that it could take days or
44 weeks before DSA engineers are dispatched to a school site after a disaster. Mr. Ross
45 observed that after the Northridge earthquake, there were cases where significant
46 structural damage was discovered long after the fact.

47
48 Participants discussed who has the authority to change tags once they are issued. They
49 noted that buildings are sometimes red- or yellow- tagged immediately after a disaster, but
50 further examination reveals they are actually safe to occupy. Committee members
51 proposed inviting an OES representative to attend a future committee meeting to discuss
52 the tagging process.

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The committee discussed how damage assessments of schools were conducted after the San Simeon earthquake.

Ms. Koplin expressed concern about charter schools, noting that many charter schools occupy buildings that were not built to public school standards. Committee members agreed that this issue should be brought to DSA's attention.

Mr. Bruce distributed a chart showing the specific SEMS functions assigned to DSA staff positions.

Mr. Wills noted CGS developed a plan identifying staff members with contact numbers. Mr. Bruce said DSA opted to identify specific positions rather than individuals because people move around and the positions and phone numbers tend to remain more constant.

Mr. Ross expressed concern that school districts may not be aware that they need to call OES and request DSA assistance after disasters. Committee members agreed it would be helpful to educate districts about the services available to them from agencies such as DSA. Mr. Ross suggested providing a flow chart to school districts to familiarize them with the inter-agency response process.

DSA/CDE/Red Cross/Local Jurisdiction Roles and Responsibilities

Ms. Koplin asked if DSA's emergency plan will clarify the interactions and roles of various agencies. Mr. Bruce said the emergency plan does not address this topic. Ms. Koplin recommended keeping this task on the committee's list and if helpful, eventually develop a flow chart to illustrate how various agencies interact with each other.

Committee members noted it would be helpful for DSA to coordinate with local emergency responders. They suggested having DSA representatives attend meetings of police and fire chief associations.

Committee Priorities and Next Steps

Ms. Koplin proposed identifying the kinds of information that should be gathered, discussing ways of communicating the information to appropriate agencies, and setting priorities in terms of which groups should be addressed first.

Ms. Koplin suggested that the committee review the LAUSD emergency plan when it is available.

Committee members recommended gathering more information on the tagging process and discussed using shake maps to identify response priorities. They noted correlating areas of likely damage with school locations can allow resources to be deployed first to the most vulnerable sites.

Ms. Koplin proposed inviting representatives from OES and fire and police associations to attend the next committee meeting.

Mr. Modugno commented that some Bay Area communities, such as Berkeley and San Leandro, have done considerable work on emergency planning. Ms. Koplin said Ms. Tarailo and she met representatives from schools, cities, and counties at the Disaster Resistant Conference in April. She proposed inviting them to attend the next meeting. After some discussion, committee members recommended holding the next meeting in

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1 northern California. Ms. Koplin suggested using the DSA Oakland office for the next
2 meeting. Committee members noted Sacramento may be better for OES. Ms. Koplin
3 asked staff to contact OES and select an appropriate meeting location.
4

New Business

5 In wrapping up the meeting & in preparation for the committee's report at the next DSA
6 Advisory Board quarterly meeting, Ms. Koplin highlighted some of the key items discussed
7 today:
8

- 9 • Update on status of DSA's emergency response plan and staff training
- 10 • Integrating DSA with OES and SEMS implementation
- 11 • OES issues: tagging process, inspector qualifications, school inspections
- 12 • Establishing priorities to inspect most vulnerable facilities first after a disaster
- 13 • Pre-evaluation and criteria for using schools and other facilities as emergency
14 shelters
- 15 • DSA criteria for emergency supply bins at school sites - contents and location
- 16 • CDE role and emergency plan evaluation process
- 17 • DSA participation at association meetings of local fire and police chiefs
- 18 • Ensuring structural safety and post-disaster evaluation of charter schools and
19 adaptive reuse buildings
- 20 • Staff to contact CDE and arrange for a new CDE architect representative on the
21 committee after Steve Newsom's position is filled.
22

23 Mr. Bate expressed an interest in attending an upcoming ATC training session. Ms. Koplin
24 asked the staff to find out when the training sessions will be offered.
25

26 Ms. Koplin advised that she and Ms. Tarailo found OES' Disaster Resistant California
27 Conference last spring very informative and worthwhile and encouraged the committee to
28 attend next year's event. The committee discussed coordinating their meeting next Spring
29 so that the date aligns with the conference.
30

Next Meeting

31 Ms. Koplin proposed scheduling the next committee meeting for October. The committee
32 decided to hold the next meeting on Thursday, October 28, in either Oakland or
33 Sacramento (depending on OES' preference) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
34
35

Adjournment

36 Ms. Koplin thanked all participants for attending. There being no further business, the
37 Safety and Emergency Response Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.
38
39

Follow Up Items

40 (No motions were made by the committee).
41

- 42 1. Oversee development of DSA's SEMS plan and staff training.
- 43 2. Collaborate w/ local emergency responders re: communication systems.
- 44 3. Work with CDE re: schools preparedness and data collection of post-disaster
45 building damage.

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- 1 4. Invite CDE representative (Steve Newsom's replacement) to join the committee.
- 2 5. Add a local building official to the committee.
- 3 6. Study emergency portable criteria.
- 4 7. Invite LAUSD staff responsible for school district facilities to the next meeting.
- 5 8. Bring to DSA's attention the committee's concerns that charter schools are not built
- 6 to public school standards.
- 7 9. Clarify interactions & roles of various agencies.
- 8 10. Helpful for DSA to coordinate with local emergency responders. Committee
- 9 suggested DSA representatives attend meetings of police and fire chief
- 10 associations.
- 11 11. Review LAUSD emergency plan when available.
- 12 12. Recommended gathering more information on the building tagging process and
- 13 discussed using shake maps to identify priorities following a disaster.
- 14 13. Invite representatives from OES and police and fire associations to the next
- 15 committee meeting.
- 16 14. Staff to ask OES which location is preferable; next committee meeting will be in
- 17 Oakland or Sacramento depending on OES response.
- 18 15. Gale Bate asked re: ATC training & staff was asked to contact ATC re: when
- 19 trainings are offered.
- 20 16. The committee was encouraged to attend OES Disaster Resistant California
- 21 Conference in Sacramento next Spring; discussed coordinating the Spring S&ERC
- 22 meeting to align with the conference.
- 23 17. Invite three person team from Alameda County to the next S&ERC meeting.
- 24 18. The next meeting will be held October 28, 2004 in Oakland or Sacramento, (will
- 25 depend on OES preference).
- 26 19. (Future task): Invite CDE representative to brief the committee on the status of

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1 CDE's emergency preparedness efforts.

2 20. (Future task): Develop criteria to guide school districts re: choosing appropriate
3 locations for emergency supply bins.

4 21. (Future task): Invite OES representative to attend future committee meeting re:
5 tagging process.

6 22. (Future task): It would be helpful to educate school districts re: services available
7 to them from agencies such as DSA. Provide flow chart to familiarize them re:
8 interagency response process.

9